
Community Relations

339.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for community relationship-building.

Additional guidance on community relations and outreach is provided in other policies, including the:

- Hate Crimes Policy.
- Limited English Proficiency Services Policy.
- Communications with Persons with Disabilities Policy.
- Chaplaincy Program Policy.
- Patrol Function Policy.
- Suspicious Activity Reporting Policy.

339.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Berkeley Police Department to promote positive relationships between members of the department and the community by treating community members with dignity and respect and engaging them in public safety strategy development and relationship-building activities, and by making relevant policy and operations information available to the community in a transparent manner.

339.3 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Officers should, as time and circumstances reasonably permit:

- (a) Make casual and consensual contacts with community members to promote positive community relationships.
- (b) Become reasonably familiar with the schools, businesses and community groups in their assigned areas.
- (c) Work with community members and the Community Services Bureau's Area Coordinators to identify issues and solve problems related to community relations and public safety.
- (d) Conduct periodic foot patrols of their assigned areas to facilitate interaction with community members. Officers carrying out foot patrols should notify an appropriate supervisor and the Communications Center of their status (i.e., on foot patrol) and location before beginning and upon completion of the foot patrol. They should also periodically inform the Communications Center of their location and status during the foot patrol.

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339.4 AREA COORDINATORS

The Community Services Bureau Lieutenant and Sergeant should designate members of the Community Services Bureau (CSB) to serve as Area Coordinators. The Area Coordinators should report directly to the CSB Sergeant and are responsible for:

- (a) Obtaining department-approved training related to his/her responsibilities.
- (b) Responding to requests from department members and the community for assistance in identifying issues and solving problems related to community relations and public safety.
- (c) Organizing surveys to measure the condition of the department's relationship with the community.
- (d) Working with community groups, department members and other community resources to:
 - 1. Identify and solve public safety problems within the community.
 - 2. Organize programs and activities that help build positive relationships between department members and the community and provide community members with an improved understanding of department operations.
- (e) Working with the Operations Division Captain to develop plans that allow officers the time to participate in community engagement and problem solving activities.

339.5 COMMUNITY AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

The Area Coordinators should organize or assist with programs and activities that create opportunities for department members and community members, especially youth, to interact in a positive setting. Examples of such programs and events include:

- (a) Department-sponsored athletic programs (e.g., baseball, basketball, soccer, bowling).
- (b) Police-community get-togethers (e.g., cookouts, meals, charity events).
- (c) Youth leadership and life skills mentoring.
- (d) Berkeley High School's Pathways/Law and Justice Class.
- (e) Neighborhood Watch and crime prevention programs.

339.6 INFORMATION SHARING

The CSB Lieutenant, or their designee, should work with the Public Information Officer to develop methods and procedures for the convenient sharing of information (e.g., major incident notifications, significant changes in department operations, comments, feedback, positive events) between the Department and community members. Examples of information-sharing methods include:

- (a) Nixle alerts.
- (b) E-mails.
- (c) Community meetings.

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- (d) Social media (see the Department Use of Social Media Policy).

Information should be regularly refreshed, to inform and engage community members continuously.

339.7 LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS EDUCATION

The CSB Lieutenant, or their designee, should develop methods to educate community members on general law enforcement operations so they may understand the work that officers do to keep the community safe. Examples of educational methods include:

- (a) Development and distribution of informational cards/flyers.
- (b) City of Berkeley website postings.
- (c) Instruction in schools.
- (d) Department ride-alongs (see the Ride-Along Policy).
- (e) Scenario/Simulation exercises with community member participation.
- (f) Youth internships at the Department.
- (g) Citizen academies.

Instructional information should include direction on the following:

- (a) How community members should interact with the police during enforcement or investigative contacts.
- (b) How community members can make a complaint to the Department regarding alleged misconduct or inappropriate job performance by department members.
- (c) How community members can submit a commendation to the Chief regarding exemplary service by department members.

339.8 SAFETY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Department members responsible for community relations activities should consider the safety of the community participants and, as much as reasonably practicable, not allow them to be present in any location or situation that would jeopardize their safety.

Department members in charge of community relations events should ensure that participating community members have completed waiver forms before participation, if appropriate. A parent or guardian must complete the waiver form if the participating community member has not reached 18 years of age.

Community members are subject to a criminal history check before approval for participation in certain activities, such as citizen academies.